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ABSTRACT

This interactive module contains 33 windows of text and three graphics, in which Freud's topographical (unconscious, pre-conscious, and conscious) and structural (id, ego, and superego) models of the psyche are studied. Seventeen fill-in questions are interspersed within the text. The module stresses the importance of comprehending the concept of unconscious motivation as a key towards understanding human behavior. The psychodynamic character of the mind is also equally stressed with various examples. (Author)

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SIGMUND FREUD'S PERSONALITY THEORY:

LEARNING MODULE EMPLOYING COMPUTER-ASSISTED INSTRUCTION TECHNOLOGY[1]

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Originally (in the years 1900 and 1915) Freud conceived the psyche or mind as made up of three parts or areas named the unconscious, the pre-conscious, and the conscious. This is the topographical model of the mind. It is called a model because it does not really exist, rather it is a scheme that Freud invented to try to explain the behavior of human beings.

We have to bear in mind that if we say that the topographical model was the original idea, we may infer that there exists another model which Freud created _____.

ANSWER: LATER ON

We said that the uncounscious, the pre-conscious, and the conscious are the three parts of the _____ model of the mind proposed by Freud.

ANSWER: TOPOGRAPHICAL

Let us see what is the unconscious. According to Freud in the unconscious mind may be found deposited the remembrance of all those traumatic, unpleasant, conflictive, punitive, or embarrasing incidents which the individual has experienced. In the unconscious may be found also all those wishes or inclinations which may cause anxiety to the individual. Ordinarily these experiences remain buried in the unconscious and do not find their way to the conscious mind.

According to Freud, the content of the unconscious mind is generally inaccessible, not to be approached by the conscious mind since that content has been buried.

If we were to represent the mind as made up of layers of a sphere, which one would you say is the unconscious? A, B, or C. ____.

ANSWER: C

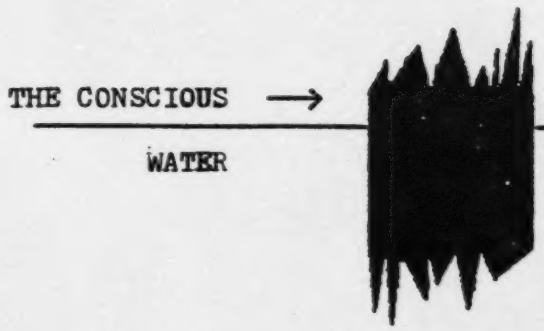
The conscious mind is made up of all that psychic (mental) content which is present to the mind at any given time.

That which you are thinking right now belongs to the _____ _____ mind.

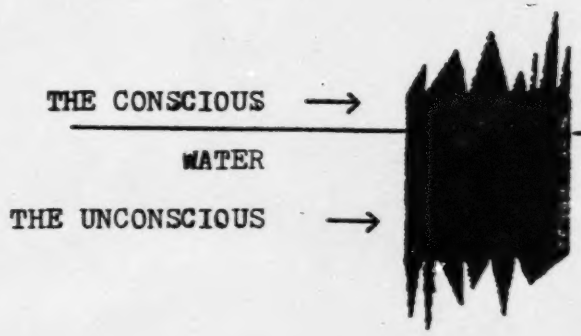
ANSWER: CONSCIOUS

The pre-conscious is an intermediate area between the conscious and the unconscious which stores the remembrance of all those experiences, images, feelings and ideas which once had been in the conscious mind but no longer are.

In an attempt to present images of his conceptual model, Freud compares the psyche (mind) with an iceberg.



The visible part which is outside, on the surface of the water, is the conscious mind.



The submerged part of the iceberg which, generally, is much bigger than the visible part, is construed to be the unconscious.

When Freud tried to explain the formation of neurotic symptoms and other phenomena of human behavior, he noted that there were certain impulses or wishes which the person was blocking, not permitting them to reach consciousness. Freud called this process repression. Nevetheless, this posed a problem. Freud localized this repressive function in the conscious mind, but according to his theory, the person was repressing in an unconscious manner, that is to say, the person was not aware that he/she was repressing. Thus, one is confronted with a contradiction because repression is described as a process that occurs unconsciously, but it is the conscious mind the agent of this process.

In summary, this represents the flaw of the _____ model of the psyche.

ANSWER: TOPOGRAPHICAL

In order to resolve this problem or inconsistency of the topographical model of the psyche, but without giving up his ideas regarding the conscious, pre-conscious, and unconscious, Freud developed in 1923 the structural model of the psyche. Freud envisions the mind as made up of three systems: the id, the ego, and the superego.

The id is the biological part of the individual. In the id may be found all the wishes, inclinations, instincts or physiological impulses of the human being. The id functions according to the pleasure principle which means that whatever is good or desirable is that which produces _____.

ANSWER: PLEASURE.
SATISFACTION.

The psyche of a newborn is wholly made up by the id. All the neonate's (newborn's) activity is directed toward satisfying its needs for pleasure by sucking and alleviating its tensions produced when the uncomfortableness of a wet diaper is felt, or certain abrupt changes (cold or warm) in temperature, hunger or thirst are felt.

It is said that the id is blind in the sense that it demands inmediate satisfaction and it does not take into account external reality. Just in the same way as a baby starts crying when it feels hungry, and notwithstanding the mother's attempts at consoling the baby while the bottle is being warmed up, the baby continues crying, thus is the id: It demands inmediate satisfaction; it lacks patience; it does not take into consideration external reality.

There exists in all of us an id, a passionate disposition, the biological part of our personality. The id is like a beast which has been tamed by our parents. but whether it be asleep or concealed, it is still there, within us.

If someone, in a rage, would impulsively assault somebody else, Freud would say that the _____, or the biological part of his personality, took hold of him/her at that moment.

ANSWER: ID

Fortunately, the id which we all carry within our personality, has been tamed. During the socialization process our parents taught us certain rules of moral conduct. We have internalized these rules, that is, we have made them part of our beings. And now it is not our parents who watch us like policemen, but our own moral conscience. Freud calls this component of our psyche the superego.

The moral prohibitions which we have internalized on the basis of our parents' teachings and which are found now in our conscience is called by Freud the _____ or moral part of our personality.

ANSWER: SUPEREGO.

Aside from the moral rules of conduct, in the superego there may be found the ideals, values or goals which had been impressed upon us by our parents or socializing agents and which we struggle to attain in our lives.

When we violate the moral rules of our superego, it punishes us inducing in ourselves feelings of guilt.

Freud says that there are moral rules in the superego which are unconscious, that is to say, that we are not aware of their existence. For example, if we find a woman who suffers from frigidity (being a healthy person and for no physiological reason this woman cannot find pleasure in sexual intercourse or cannot have an orgasm) and we probe about her upbringing perhaps we may find that her parents taught her that sex was something dirty, shameful, disagreeable. Every time that her parents saw her touching her genitals, the way children often do upon discovering their own bodies, they used to physically punish and reprimand her severely. This woman learned to associate sex with punishment. We should not be surprised now to learn that she is frigid. Of course, the earlier experiences of punishment were forgotten and buried in the _____.

ANSWER: UNCONSCIOUS.

Even though this woman loves her husband, she is unable of liberating herself from the punishment experiences collected in her unconscious superego. That is why she finds sex so _____ _____.

ANSWER: DISAGREEABLE
DISTASTEFUL
OFFENSIVE
UNPLEASANT
DISGUSTFUL

Coming back to the structural model of the psyche (the id, the ego, and the superego), we have already explained what is the id and the superego. Let us see what the ego is.

Freud conceives the ego as the executive part of our personality. It is the ego the one responsible for making transactions with reality and for being the mediator between the id and the superego.

For example: If a student were invited on a Thursday night to eat pizza with his/her friends, but he/she had to study for a next day test,

Which part of his/her psyche would be inclined to go and eat pizza? _____

Which part of his/her psyche would be inclined to stay home and study for the exam? _____

ANSWER: 1st blank ID

2nd blank SUPEREGO

The id and the superego engage in an internal fight and the ego is the one which decides whom it will attend to. But, of course, the superego is not always the winner. The role of the ego is not to frustrate the id continuously.

The id is like a very fortunate heir, having a great wealth, but not being very intelligent. With all his/her wealth, he/she has very impractical wishes. If he/she likes to travel on the sea, he/she decides to buy a luxury liner. Being fond of baseball, he/she decides to become the owner of a baseball team. With all this he/she becomes indebted. Finally he/she hires a knowledgeable administrator. The administrator resembles the ego whose function consists in curbing the irrational wishes of the id. The id is the one who has the resources, but it is the administrator the one who makes good use of them. His task lies in satisfying his boss' wishes without making him bankrupt, and without provoking his wrath.

When the id says: "I want it and I want it right now", the ego responds: "I will try to get it for you; give me a chance to develop a plan to acquire it. Would you accept a substitute or would you be willing to accept less than that which you asked for?"

The ego is a mediator, negociating between the _____ and the _____.

ANSWER: ID....SUPEREGO

SUPEREGO....ID

In one of his books Freud says that as the biblical proverb says that man cannot serve two masters: God and money, in an analogous way although a bit more pressed may be found the ego. The ego has to serve three master: the id, the superego. and external reality.

Freud's theory has been labelled psychodynamic. The word "dynamic" implies force, movement. The prefix "psycho" refers to the mind. Thus, "psychodynamic" refers to the internal forces of the mind (id, ego, and superego) which fight among them. The id requires _____ satisfaction.

ANSWER: INMEDIATE
ON THE SPOT
RIGHT AWAY

But the ego has to take into account if external reality permits this satisfaction. Is this the appropriate place? Is this the adequate moment? If the response to both questions is negative, then the ego tells the id: "Could you postpone your satisfaction?

The superego, on his part, is also pressuring the ego, being vigilant so that the moral rules be respected. But the role of the ego does not consist in constantly frustrating the id and obeying the superego. On some occassions it has to take the id into account and attend to its needs.

In summary, we may say that the id, the ego, and the superego are the three elements of the _____ model of the psyche constructed by Freud. Formerly he had created the _____ model of the psyche where he located the unconscious, the pre-conscious, and the conscious.

Without abandoning his ideas about the conscious, pre-conscious, and unconcious, Freud employs the structural model to explain the _____ of human behavior and of the mind's functioning. The id, ego, and superego are three internal forces which fight amongst themselves for imposing their wishes.

ANSWERS:

1st blank: structural

2nd blank: topographical

3rd blank: dynamic

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AUTHOR ABSTRACT
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Abstract (up to 200 words):

This interactive module contains thirty three windows of text and three graphics in which Freud's topographical (unconscious, pre-conscious, and conscious) and structural (id, ego, and superego) models of the psyche are studied. Interspersed within the text are seventeen fill-in the blank questions posed at the reader.

The module stresses the importance of comprehending the concept of unconscious motivation as a key towards understanding human behavior.

The psychodynamic character of the mind is also equally stressed with various examples.

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